

Breaking Down the

BARRIERS

Alberta Transportation

February 2003

Parking Headaches Cured

If you drive a wheelchair van, then you know first hand the frustration that comes when someone parks too close and blocks in your ramp. Scott Ellefson, a member of the Canadian Paraplegic Association, was tired of waiting for people to come back to their cars so he could get into his own van and decided to get creative.

Scott's solution was to come up with a way that other drivers would know that he needed extra space beside his van without him having to be there.



Scott invented a device called the "Parking Sentry." It consists of a sealed stainless steel containment box, spring assisted raising arms, and a plastic telescoping arm that serves as the barrier. There are two nylon straps, one to raise the unit out of the box, the other to pull the telescopic arm out. To return the unit to storage, simply push the arm back into first stainless steel section, then push down and the springs will help return the unit back into the containment box. The lid is secured by two latches and is weather resistant.

To stop someone from boxing you in, you pull up in your van, exit the vehicle, go around to your back bumper, lift up Scott's device, extend its barrier arm across the parking spot beside you, and go about your business. You don't have to worry about whether you'll be stuck when you return to your van.

Scott has been using the prototype around Calgary since May, 2002 and finds other drivers respect the barrier. In fact, he has had positive feedback from able-bodied and disabled drivers alike.

A real advantage is all you need is to find two regular parking stalls to be able to park. This is an advantage when existing designated parking stalls are either full or not available.

For more information you can contact Scott Ellefson at:

Invention Development Group Ltd.
720, 933-17 Avenue S.W., Calgary, AB T2T 5R6
Phone: (403) 245-6222 Fax: (403) 245-9637
e-mail: scott58@telusplanet.net

or call Barry Lindemann of the Canadian Paraplegic Association in Calgary, Alberta at (403) 228-3001

GST on Converted Vans & Mini-Buses



When new accessible vehicles are purchased in Alberta, they are subject to Goods and Services Tax (GST) at the full seven per cent rate in the same way as all other new vehicles. However, the tax payable on a portion of the purchase price attributed to the costs of making the vehicle accessible may qualify for a GST rebate. Your vehicle supplier should know what this portion is.

Assuming the sole purpose of purchasing a new accessible vehicle is to transport a person with a disability, Calgary Handi-Bus Association, other not-for-profits, and vehicle suppliers firmly believe the entire purchase price should be zero-rated or exempt from the GST.

For further information, please contact:

Pat Pellegrino, General Manager, Calgary Handi-Bus Association
Phone: (403) 276-8028
e-mail: ppellegrino@calgaryhandibus.com

Profile – Member of the Advisory Committee on Barrier Free Transportation



Name: Murray Campbell

Occupation: General Manager

**Lethbridge Handi-Bus Association
City of Lethbridge**

1. How did you become interested in transportation issues?

A family background of two generations in the transportation services in both British Columbia and Alberta, along with thirty years of personal service formed a direction that included many facets of inter-model transportation services and its development. The issues surrounding that development only enhanced my interest.

2. What is your role on the Barrier Free Committee and why did you become involved?

Transportation issues are unique to those that offer accessible transportation within their communities. Challenges to providing such services grow along with community growth. Although I represent the Lethbridge Handi-Bus Association and its operation, communication within the industry holds the key to addressing the issues of the aging and persons with disabilities and co-ordinated service. I see my involvement on the committee as a liaison for the needs of persons with disabilities and seniors to allow them to be involved in their community and for their interests in meeting those needs.

Representing a smaller community with major growth in this area allows us to see a much larger picture of where we may be in the future development of services. I am impressed with the approach and efforts of the committee. Smaller regions such as southern Alberta do bring somewhat different challenges to the committee such as human rights issues as an example.

Vision and future planning play an important role through the committee at large.

3. What are the major concerns or issues you have related to accessible transportation?

There are a number of challenges facing the community of Lethbridge in the immediate future. This includes such venues as transportation for the Calgary Health Region and a more community-based health care system. The demographics and costs related to this, as opposed to institutionalized health care, has put much of the burden on the service supplier. Community committee groups and the clientele they serve must be better informed as to what those challenges represent. The advisory committee provides an excellent vehicle of information and problem solving to that end.

The Lethbridge community has been challenged by the ruling of the Human Rights Commission requiring the community provide equitable transportation services to all members of the community. Stand-alone service providers must look at long-term integrated services to improve delivery and costs. In a fast growing city, expectations and demographics add to the demand for fixed-route services to be totally accessible, in addition to co-ordination of service delivery with those that are high demand clients. Lastly, critical information must be shared by all that face such a challenge in the changing times of this industry. The advisory committee provides the vehicle towards that co-ordination.

Did You Know?

On November 28, 2002, the Cities of Calgary, Edmonton and Red Deer held their "Designated Parking Awareness Day" to raise the public's awareness that designated parking stalls should be reserved for use by those having the greatest needs. Alberta Transportation was pleased to participate at the City of Edmonton's event to discuss key aspects of the Parking Placards for Persons with Disabilities Policy.

For more information about this policy, please visit the following website:

www.trans.gov.ab.ca

Alberta Disability Strategy

The Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities recently released the Alberta Disability Strategy, a document intended to enable persons with disabilities to participate fully in all aspects of society. The strategy calls upon governments and other service providers to take a more inclusive, holistic approach to disability issues, needs and services.

Development of the strategy involved a series of open houses, discussions with persons with disabilities, stakeholder led organizations such as the Alberta Disabilities Forum, and a number of government departments including Alberta Transportation and Premier's Council subcommittees.

The Premier's Council believes that, given the proper support and commitment, persons with disabilities will be able to participate in all aspects of Alberta society. Major recommendations for immediate implementation are:

1. Albertans should be made more aware of the rights, needs and aspirations of persons with disabilities.
2. The Government of Alberta must ensure that the needs of persons with disabilities related to daily living activities are met.
3. A commitment should be made to embrace the principles of universal accessibility and a process put in place to remove physical barriers from public spaces so that all Albertans can fully participate in all community, employment and business activities.
4. The Government of Alberta's current system of appeals should be governed by the rules of administrative law (quasi-judicial) and become more transparent and respectful of individual need.
5. The Government of Alberta should create a single, province-wide program that integrates current disability support programs and funding under one philosophy and set of criteria. This Community Support model would provide individualized support, enabling persons with disabilities to have a

choice in the marketplace and independently make decisions about their needs and service providers.

6. The Government of Alberta should improve access to all levels of education by linking and integrating education resources, setting standards for special education programs, ensuring all education facilities are physically accessible, reviewing the enrolment appeal process at schools, expanding counselling support, and monitoring implementation of the recommendations of Alberta Learning's Review of Special Education in Alberta.
7. The Government of Alberta should separate income support programs from personal support programs so that individuals are not automatically penalized for earning an income and becoming part of the workforce.
8. Alberta employers and governments should provide long-term support and commitment to persons with disabilities attempting to enter the workforce and to participate on public boards, commissions or committees.

The Alberta Disability Strategy also includes an Accountability Framework to measure and track the level and quality of supports for persons with disabilities.

The Premiers Council has called on the Alberta Government to accept the Alberta Disability Strategy as the foundation for future legislation, government policy and direction affecting persons with disabilities.

For further information about this strategy, please contact:

Terry Keyko,
Interim Executive Director
Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities
Phone: (780) 422-2451
e-mail: terry.keyko@gov.ab.ca

Accessible Taxis in Red Deer

Associated Cabs of Red Deer continues to operate three converted mini-vans as accessible taxis.

Through an agreement with the Citizens Action Bus, the accessible taxis take the overflow runs that the Action Bus service cannot accommodate. These vehicles have been operating for about a year.

The new taxi service is much appreciated by users and industry. It provides options for users as well as taking the overflow ridership at peak times.

For further information, please contact:

Mr. Paul Richard
Owner/Operator, Associated Cabs
Phone: (403) 343-3300
e-mail: pdrichard@shaw.ca



Access Guide Canada

Planning a trip? Abilities Magazine's web site has recently been expanded to reflect new information related to transportation and travel. Just go to <http://www.enablelink.org/> and search in the fields of "Travel" and "Transportation" from the menu on the left and check out the information in the drop down menus. You will find information such as:

- Canadians with disabilities holding a valid parking permit issued in their jurisdiction can travel in the 40 European countries represented by the European Conference of Ministers of Transport and use their home parking permits.
- A list of accessible cabs, buses and other transportation services from cities around the world.



- The Council of Canadians with Disabilities, a regular contributor to the Forum section of **Abilities Magazine**, has a Transportation Committee working to increase accessible transportation across the country.



The site can also be used to access the magazine's "message board" to exchange news and views with other visitors, or exchange travel notes in "real time."



Lack Of Seating Space On Airlines For Passengers Who Are Obese

In October 2002, the Canadian Transportation Agency dismissed an application by Linda McKay-Panos against Air Canada regarding the seating accommodation provided by the airline. Air Canada had a policy of charging for 1 ½ seats to accommodate passengers who require additional seating space due to obesity.

Two of the three agency members found that although Ms. McKay-Panos may have health problems, impairments, limitations or restrictions caused by her obesity, she does not have a disability for the purposes of the accessibility provision of the Canada Transportation Act

In its decision, the Agency found Ms. McKay-Panos had not identified activity limitations relating to accessing the transportation system. She can physically access airports, check her luggage, present herself to security points in airports and reach the boarding gate, like the majority of Canadians.

The Agency concluded, "it is not the obstacle that makes a person deaf, blind or paraplegic and the Agency does not agree that it should be different in the case of obesity."

Details of the decision can be found at:

http://www.cta-otc.gc.ca/media/communique/2002/021023_e.html

Federal Government's Report on "Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities"

On December 3, 2002, the Honourable Jane Stewart, Minister of Human Resources Development Canada, released a report entitled "Advancing the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities: A Government of Canada Report-December 2002."

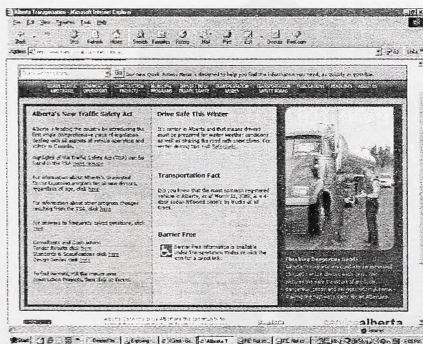
This is the Federal Government's first comprehensive report on disability in Canada that describes where our country has made progress, how the Federal Government has contributed, and where work remains to be done.

Included in the report are preliminary results from the 2001 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS). PALS 2001 provides current data on the prevalence of disability in Canada.

For a copy of the report, please visit the following web site:

<http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/021203/td021203.htm>

Alberta Transportation's New Web Site



Alberta Transportation recently launched its new web site. This site, www.trans.gov.ab.ca, gives access to a wide variety of information managed by Alberta Transportation. Information on Barrier Free material, including the Alberta Inter-Community Public Transportation Guide and the Parking Placards Policy, is available at:

<http://www.trans.gov.ab.ca/TransportationModes/BarrierFree.asp>

or simply click the internationally recognized wheelchair symbol for access to these materials.

Did You Know?

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has approved several transit related projects as part of its Green Municipal Funds including a grant to the City of Grande Prairie to support development of co-ordinated transportation services for persons with disabilities.

For more information about the study please contact:

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DON'T FORGET



To access
key information on
Barrier-Free initiatives,
please visit Alberta
Transportation's website
at www.trans.gov.ab.ca

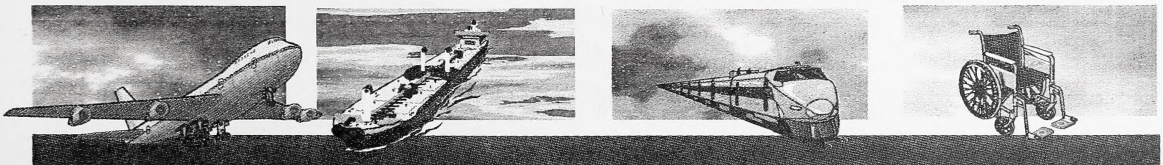
Breaking Down the Barriers is published by Alberta Transportation to provide information about transportation issues of interest to persons with disabilities and related organizations. It is distributed to municipalities, service providers, provincial organizations and consumer groups in Alberta. To be added to the distribution list, please phone (780) 427-7944 or dial 310-0000 for a toll free connection outside Edmonton. The views and opinions expressed in **Breaking Down the Barriers** do not necessarily reflect those of the Editorial Board or Alberta Transportation. Any article in this publication may be reproduced, provided credit is given to the newsletter.

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